

Comments on the Army Corps' proposed deviation in Lake O operations

Allie Preston, communications director, Bullsugar.org

The Army Corps' acknowledgment demonstrates that the need to protect our communities from cyanotoxins is of the utmost importance and can be done today by changing operational priorities. The proposed deviation validates the change in priorities Bullsugar has fought for with Rep. Mast and Friends of the Everglades, exemplified by the PROTECT Florida Act.

Alex Gillen, executive director, Friends of the Everglades:

Friends of the Everglades is proud to have worked with Bullsugar.org and Rep. Brian Mast to diligently pursue the change to operations that are being proposed by the Army Corps today. By changing our priorities in how we manage the system, we can protect Floridians' health, economy, and environment today, for free, and without waiting decades for infrastructure to be built.

We applaud the Army Corps for recognizing that (1) they are not doing enough to protect our health in the current management of Lake Okeechobee; (2) they can do more under their existing 1948 congressional authorization to protect human health; and (3) the current 1948 congressional authorization limits the extent to which the Army Corps can protect human health, which is why Congress needs to adopt the Protect Florida Act.

Never before has the Army Corps agreed that we must minimize cyanotoxins in our communities to prevent a public health catastrophe and we can do so by changing how we move water around the system in South Florida.

The Army Corps is saying we are going to manage for the worst and hope for the best, not bury our heads in the sand and say toxic algae is not my fault and not my problem.